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ALL THE WORLD'S STAGE.

THE

AMATEUR

DRAMA

THE

LAST LOAF.

BOSTON:
WALTER H. BAKER & CO.
NO. 23 WINTER STREET.

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GEORGE M. BAKER'S PLAYS.

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- VISIONS OF FREEDOM.** Allegory for 16 females.
- USING THE WEED.** Farce in one act. 7 females.
- WANTED, A MALE COOK.** Farce in one act. 4 males.
- WAR OF THE ROSES.** Allegory for 8 females.
- WE'RE ALL TEETOTALERS.** Farce in one scene. 4 males, 2 females.

W. H. Baker
THE LAST LOAF

A DRAMA.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Better Than Gold," "Our Folks," "The Flower of the Family," "Enlisted for the War," "My Brother's Keeper," "The Little Brown Jug," "Above the Clouds," "One Hundred Years Ago," "Among the Breakers," "Bread on the Waters," "Down by the Sea," "Once on a Time," "The Last Loaf," "Stand by the Flag," "The Tempter," "A Mysterious Disappearance," "Paddle Your Own Canoe," "A Drop too Much," "A Little More Cider," "A Thorn Among the Roses," "Never Say Die," "Seeing the Elephant," "The Boston Dip," "The Duchess of Dublin," "Thirty Minutes for Refreshments," "We're all Teetotalers," "A Close Shave," "A Public Benefactor," "A Sea of Troubles," "A Tender Attachment," "Coals of Fire," "Freedom of the Press," "Shall Our Mothers Vote?" "Gentlemen of the Jury," "Humors of the Strike," "My Uncle the Captain," "New Brooms Sweep Clean," "The Great Elixir," "The Hypochondriac," "The Man with the Demijohn," "The Runaways," "The Thief of Time," "Wanted, a Male Cook," "A Love of a Bonnet," "A Precious Pickle," "No Cure no Pay," "The Champion of Her Sex," "The Greatest Plague in Life," "The Grecian Bend," "The Red Chignon," "Using the Weed," "Lightheart's Pilgrimage," "The Revolt of the Bees," "The Sculptor's Triumph," "The Tournament of Idylcourt," "The War of the Roses," "An Original Idea," "Bonbons," "Capuletta," "Santa Claus' Frolics," "Snow-Bound," "The Merry Christmas of the Old Woman Who Lived in a Shoe," "The Pedler of Very Nice," "The Seven Ages," "Too Late for the Train," "The Vision of Freedom," "Rebecca's Triumph," "Comrades," "Past Redemption," "Nevada," &c., &c.

BOSTON

Walter H. Baker & Co.

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Baker, George Melville,
The last loaf
c1875.

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BOSTON:
STEREOTYPED AND PRINTED BY
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Hawkins

THE LAST LOAF.

A DRAMA IN TWO ACTS.

CHARACTERS.

MARK ASHTON, a Silversmith (thirty-eight years of age).
CALEB HANSON, a Baker (forty years of age).
HARRY HANSON, his son (eighteen years of age).
DICK BUSTLE, a Journeyman Baker (twenty-five years of age).
TOM CHUBBS, a Butcher (twenty-five years of age).
KATE ASHTON, Mark's wife (thirty-six years of age).
LILLY ASHTON, their daughter (sixteen years of age).
PATTY JONES, a Yankee girl (twenty-two years of age).

COSTUMES.

MA. & ASHTON. Act 1, Neat modern dress, with breakfast-jacket.
Act 2, Rusty-black suit and black necktie, without collar; general seedy appearance.

CALEB HANSON. Act 1, Blue coat, brass buttons, white vest, light pants. Act 2, Brown coat, plaid vest and pants.

HARRY HANSON. Modern suits.

DICK BUSTLE. Act 1, Short light pants, white stockings, shoes, plaid vest, green jacket, paper cap. Act 2, Blue sailor-rig, — pants, shirt, and jacket, — with paper cap as in first act.

TOM CHUBBS. Act 1, Butcher's frock — white — and cap. Act 2 Butcher's frock — blue — and tall hat.

KATE ASHTON. Act 1, Handsome evening dress. Act 2, Black dress, white collar and cuffs.

LILLY ASHTON. Act 1, Pretty evening dress, flowing curls. Act 2, Plain black dress, white apron, collar, and cuffs.

PATTY JONES. Act 1, Brown dress, white apron, collar, and cuffs, cap. Act 2, Plaid dress.

A period of five years supposed to elapse between the acts.

ACT 1. SCENE. — *Apartment in MARK ASHTON'S house.*

Table, C., at which sits MARK ASHTON, L., reading a newspaper. KATE ASHTON, R., sewing. Lounge, R. Piano, L., at which sits LILLY, playing "Home, sweet Home," as the curtain rises (should it be inconvenient to have a piano on the stage, let LILLY sit L., engaged with some fancy needle-work, and sing, if she can, "Home, sweet Home"). Flowers, little knick-knacks, any thing to make the room look cosy, should be displayed about the stage.

Mark. "Home, sweet Home." Ah, Kate! blest is the man who can say that, conscious he is the possessor of such a treasure. Now here am I, Mark Ashton, once a gay, thoughtless dog, throwing my money away as fast as earned, never taking heed of the morrow, — easy-going Mark Ashton, always ready for a lark. But across my path steps a neat, pretty maid, — don't blush Kate, — and, presto, change! before I know it, up springs a dear home, with a loving wife to adorn it, and a sweet little daughter — I declare, the girl is listening!

Kate. Of course she is; astonished to find her sedate father so far forget himself as to indulge in such absurd panegyrics.

Lilly. Why, mother, where did you find that stupendous word?

Mark. Ha, ha! Kate, you astonished her more than I did. Lilly, my dear, it strikes me that you and Harry Hanson are very intimate.

Lilly. Why, pa! I haven't seen Harry for ever and ever so long.

Mark. No, not since twelve o'clock, when I saw him beaving you home from school.

Lilly. But I can't help it if he happens to come along when school is out, and is coming straight home, can I?

Mark. Oh! certainly not; nor can you help taking the longest route, and managing to get home after dinner is cold.

Kate. Now, Mark, don't hector Lilly about Harry Hanson. If they like each other's company, there's no harm in it.

Mark. Well, I don't know about that. Caleb Hanson is a queer fish, and, since he has made money, a little inclined to be proud. He might object to this intimacy; and, as he is my oldest friend, I should not like to quarrel with him to humor a little girl who —

Lilly. You love very dearly, and to whom you never refuse any thing. If Mr. Hanson don't like it, send him to me. I could just twist him round my fingers —

Mark. As you do everybody else. Well, I won't meddle; but be careful, child, for matrimony is a terrible thing to contemplate.

Kate. Matrimony! I believe, Mark, you are losing your senses, to talk so to a girl only sixteen.

Mark. Only sixteen! 'Tis a dangerous age. |

remember the time when a young lady only sixteen ~~en~~ trapped me into a confession —

Kate. Lilly, you had better go up stairs: your father is quite ill.

Mark. No, no: don't send her away. I'll behave myself, indeed I will: I only wished to caution —

Lilly. Shall I go, mother?

Mark. No, don't. I'm dumb: give me "Home, sweet Home" again, and I will be very quiet.

Harry. (*Outside, L.*) Thank you, Patty. Don't trouble yourself. I'll find the way.

Lilly. Why, that's Harry! Now, what sent him here?

Mark. How innocent, — and only sixteen!

Enter HARRY HANSON, L., with a bouquet.

Harry. Ah! all here? Good-evening, Mrs. Ashton. Good-evening, Mr. Ashton.

Kate. Good-evening, Harry.

Mark. Come right in, Harry: glad to see you; always glad to see you.

Harry. Thank you. You are very kind. I brought a few flowers for Lilly (*presenting bouquet*).

Lilly. Oh! thank you, Harry. Ar'n't they beautiful, mother? Oh, I'm so much obliged to you for thinking of me!

Harry. Oh! it's no consequence. I happened to see them in a store on my way home, and they looked so pretty I thought I would buy them. After I had bought them, I did not know what to do with them, and so I — I — you'll excuse my bringing them to you, won't you?

Lilly. Why, Harry, I shall prize them very much because you did bring them; and I shall love — that is — I — shall like you all the better.

Mark. Kate, don't you think the young people could get along with their eyes a little better if we retired?

Kate. I think so, Mark. Lilly, you must entertain Harry till I return. I must give directions to Patty about breakfast. (*Exit, L.*)

Mark. By George! I forgot all about that letter of Smith's. Make yourself at home, Harry. I'll be back soon. (*Exit, R.*)

Lilly. O Harry! it was so kind of you to bring me those flowers, so fresh and sweet (*sits on lounge*).

Harry (sits beside her). I'm so glad you like them. After I left you to-day, I thought what a long time it would be before I saw you again to-morrow; and I tried to think of some excuse to come to-night, when these flowers attracted my attention, and away I went after them. Wasn't it a jolly good excuse?

Lilly. Harry, you need not find excuses to bring you here: we're always glad to see you. I'm sure father and mother are always glad to see you; and you cannot doubt that I am.

Harry. No, indeed, Lilly; of you I am sure. But to come here, where you are all so happy, seems like an intrusion. It's such a change from our old gloomy home! Since mother died, that place has been like a prison to me. Father never did take much notice of me, and now he absolutely shuns me. I can't stand it much longer. Some dark night I shall tie my clothes up in a bundle, creep out of the house, and wander off in search of fortune.

Lilly. What! run away? You don't mean it?

Harry. Ay, but I do. You know Capt. Bangs?

Lilly. Of course I do; and like him too: he's such a splendid sailor! I do like sailors. If I was a man, I'd be one, and climb up the main hatches and the jib-booms, and heave-ho with the best of 'em.

Harry. Now heave to, as the captain says. I've been talking with him. He's off to-morrow morning, bright and early, for China; and he wants me to go with him.

Lilly. What! you, Harry?

Harry. Yes: he says that it only takes five years to make a fortune in China. Wouldn't it be grand to come back in five years, rich, respected, and able to snap my fingers at the best of 'em?

Lilly. Yes; and with your head shaved, and a long queue dangling behind. Oh! I shouldn't like that.

Harry. What would you do if I should accede to the captain's proposal?

Lilly. Cry my eyes out. Oh, you mustn't go, Harry!

Harry. Well, I haven't gone yet; and, if I don't make up my mind to-night, my chance is lost. But come, Lilly; put on your hat, and go take a walk. It's a beautiful moonlight night.

Lilly. Oh, that will be splendid! Wait till I get my hat. (*Runs off, R.*)

Harry. She's a dear little girl. She'll make some fellow very happy one of these days. Heighho! I wonder if it will be me. Precious little chance I have of ever winning her. Father is evidently disposed to keep me under his thumb, and bring me up to a life of idleness

When I propose to seek some occupation by which to earn my own living, he laughs at me, and tells me the place for boys is at home. Boy, indeed! He will yet find the boy can think and act for himself. Why should I stay here, to be the plaything of his changing humors, when Capt. Bangs offers me such a chance to make my fortune? why wait?

Lilly. (*Outside, R.*) One minute, Harry, and I'll be with you.

Harry. Ah! there's the answer. The old, old story. How can I leave her?

Enter LILLY, R.

Lilly. Come, Harry, tie my hat, and I am ready.

Harry (*tying the hat*). Certainly. What a pretty hat!

Lilly. Do you like it? I'm glad of that.

Harry. The hat is pretty, and the face —

Lilly. Now, Harry Hanson, don't be foolish. Why, how long you are tying it!

Harry. I'm not used to it, Lilly.

Lilly. Well, you needn't get so near it.

Harry. Something bothers me.

Lilly. What is it?

Harry. Your lips. (*Kisses her.*)

Enter DICK BUSTLE, L., with a small account-book in his hand.

Dick. Ahem! Now, then, what is it, white or brown!

LILLY gives a little scream, and steps back, R. HARRY starts to L. DICK, C.

Harry. Dick Bustle, what sent you here?

Dick. Business, Master Harry, business. I'm on my rounds, taking orders for the morning bread. What is it, Miss Lilly, — white or brown? Either, both, or neither? Square, brick, family, twists, rolls, or muffins?

Lilly. I'm sure I don't know. You must ask Patty Jones.

Dick. But I can't find her. She's not in the domain of pots and kettles; and, if she has retired to her domicile beneath the eaves, you surely would not expect me to ascend to that hallowed and sacred retreat, would you?

Harry. Nonsense, Dick. Your language is altogether too fine for a baker.

Dick. Well, I suppose it is. 'Tis the fruit of my early education. I was born for a higher sphere; but Fortune, the fickle goddess, frowned upon my tender youth, and left me, like the lilies of the field, to toil and spin.

Lilly. What an idea! The lilies of the field — "they toil not, neither do they spin."

Dick. Don't they? Well, I knew 'twas one or t'other. It's this confounded business bothers me. Mixing so much dough with my hands rather mixes things in my head, and makes me —

Harry. A regular dough-head. I see.

Dick. Yes, exactly. No, — no, — I don't mean that.

Harry. But I do. Dick, you're the best fellow in the world; but you do muddle things dreadfully. Let books alone, and stick to your business.

Dick. Never! I'm determined to rise in the world

Harry. Then stick to your business. You'll find plenty of opportunities to *rise* in that.

Dick. No, Master Harry: I'm not in my true *spear*. Fate has something better in store for me. I'm determined to be a philosopher, or an inventor, or a discoverer. I'll be a second Christopher Columbus, and discover a new world. By-the-by, how about that little China scheme. Made up your mind to go?

Harry. No: I've given it up.

Dick. Given it up! You don't mean it! Why, there never was such a chance. Fame, fortune, every thing, awaiting you in the great empire of pigtails and Schushong. You don't mean it!

Harry. Yes, I do, Dick. There are ties that bind me here, that I haven't the heart to break. Come, Lilly, are you ready?

Lilly. Quite, Harry. Good-by, Dick — I mean Mr. Bustle, philosopher, discoverer, inventor, baker. Ha, ha!

Harry. Stick to your dough, Dick. (*Exeunt LILLY and HARRY, L.*)

Dick. Stick to my dough! Not if I knows myself. Now, there's a youth, with Fortune a-winkin' at him with both eyes, turnin' away and goin' straight to destruction with a pretty girl a-hangin' on his arm. Ties that bind him! Nothin' on airth but that gal's apron-string. Jest let old Hanson find out what's goin' on, and he'd snap that air tie shorter than pie-crust. Another slip-up, Dick. Buttered side down, agin, Bustle. I did hope Harry would have taken up with Capt. Bangs's offer; and then with me to protect his gentle youth, how we would

hev made them air Chinamen howl! But it's no use. In the poetic language of Smith, Jones, or some great poet, —

I never had a piece of bread
Particularly long and wide,
 But what it fell upon the floor,
 And always on the buttered side.

What is to be, won't, on this particular occasion, the prophets and so forth to the contrary notwithstanding'.

Enter PATTY JONES, R.

Patty. Law, Mr. Bustle, is that you?

Dick (*pulling out his account-book*). Exactly. White or brown? either, both, or neither? Brick, family, twist, square, rolls, or muffins?

Patty. Law, Mr. Bustle, I don't know. You must ask Mrs. Ashton.

Dick. And will you be kind enough, Miss Patty, and obliging enough, Miss Jones, to seek Mrs. Ashton, and propound to her the necessary questions, whereby I may obtain the knowledge of her requirements in the way of bread, Miss Jones?

Patty. Law, Mr. Bustle, in what a highly edifying, romantic, and elegant style you do talk! Been at the dictionary agin, hey?

Dick. Dictionary! 'tis my pocket companion; the pillow on which this weary head reposes when night falls upon the tired earth, and — and — the what — what you may call 'ems — fold — their — things —

Patty. Ha, ha! Dick, it's no use: you'll never be a

scholar. So drop the big words, and sit down and let's have a real good old-fashioned gossip.

Dick. With all my heart, Patty Jones. I'll lay aside my learning, and be, like you, a common clod.

Patty. Clod! and pray what do you mean by that? A common clod, indeed! Mr. Bustle, there's the door.

Dick. Now, don't get mad, Patty: 'twas only a *lapsu lingue*.

Patty. Oh! was that all? Well, Dick, I'll forgive you. Do you know I've got something nice to tell you? I'm going somewhere.

Dick. Well, that is a piece of information highly conducive —

Patty. Mr. Bustle, there's the door.

Dick. Now, don't get mad, Patty. I must let off these big words once in a while.

Patty. Very well, Mr. Bustle: when you feel inclined to do so, just waste them on the desert air, not on me.

Dick. You are going somewhere?

Patty. Oh, yes! I'm going to singing-school to-morrow night with Tom Chubbs.

Dick. What! you, Patty Jones, — a high-toned damsel, — thus to demean yourself by accepting the attentions of such an insignificant, ignoble —

Patty. Mr. Bustle, there's the door.

Dick. Let it stay there. Tom Chubbs, indeed! — a man who cuts up hogs, slices steaks, dissects calves. Confound him, he's nothing but a calf himself!

Patty. He's clever, polite, and don't use big words. Why shouldn't I go with him?

Dick. He's nothing but a butcher.

Patty. And you nothing but a baker.

Dick. Don't go with him, Patty.

Patty. Why not? He's dying for me.

Dick. And so am I. O Patty Jones! you little know the heart that beats within this tender breast. Turn from this bloody butcher, and smile upon the high-toned baker.

Patty. Dick Bustle, you're a donkey. Your head, never too steady on your shoulders, has been completely turned by your trying to fill it with scraps of wisdom, tumbled in like old iron in a junk-shop. High-toned baker, indeed! I wouldn't have you if there wa'n't another man in creation.

Dick. Buttered side down agin, Bustle! Patty Jones, farewell. How I have loved you! I — you — that is, both of us — confound it, I'm going off to the far antipodes, where woman's smile can never reach me more. I'm a broken-hearted man, from this time henceforth and forever more.

Patty. Save the pieces, Dick. They may come handy some time.

Dick. And can you jest at such a time?

Patty. Of course I can. (*Sings.*)

“For I care for nobody, — no, not I,
And nobody cares for me,”

except Tom Chubbs the butcher.

Dick. Oh! that's the last camel that broke the --
no — no — that's the last straw —

Hanson. (*Outside, L.*) Doors wide open, and nobody at home!

Patty. Gracious ! why, that's Mr. Hanson ! (*Exit, L.*)

Dick. O Lord ! Old Hanson ! Buttered side down agin, Bustle ! Now, what's to be done ? He'll find me here, and won't there be a breeze ! This comes of neglecting business for pleasure. I wish I was well out of this. He's coming this way, and I can't get out of it. He won't stop long ; so I'll make a merit of necessity, and crawl under that lounge. (*Crawls under lounge, face towards audience.*)

Enter PATTY and MR. HANSON, L.

Hanson. You're sure he is at home, Patty ?

Patty. Oh, yes, sir ! he's up stairs with Mrs. Ashton. Sit down, sir, and I'll run and tell him you are here. Why, where can Dick have gone ? (*Exit, R.*)

Hanson. Snug quarters here. Mark is doing well, and that wife of his is a jewel. Well, we both started fair in the world ; but fate has dealt kindly with him, while upon me she has showered her hardest blows. How comfortable every thing looks here ! Mark can't have laid by much money : that's where I have the advantage of him ; but I'd give it all for the happiness he must enjoy in this little nest.

Enter MARK, R.

Mark. Why, Cleb, old boy, I'm glad to see you !

Hanson. Ah, Mark ! thank you, thank you.

Mark. Sit down, and make yourself at home. We don't see half enough of each other. (*They sit R. and L. of table.*)

Hanson. That's true, Mark. One would scarce believe

that you and I were once such cronies. Why, twenty years ago we were inseparable.

Mark. Yes, always together; gay, happy, thoughtless boys, up to all manner of mischief, and ever ready for a gay time. Ah! those days, those good old days! O Cleb, would I were a boy again!

Hanson. What! do you not enjoy this happy wedded life, this peaceful home?

Mark. To be sure I do. Why, Cleb, there's not a happier man in this city than I. But you know there's sometimes a wish in a man's heart to go back on life's journey, to smooth some rough spot where he stumbled.

Hanson. I scarcely understand you.

Mark. You know, Cleb, in those days I was a little wild; and the recollection of that sometimes saddens my thoughtful hours.

Hanson. Yes, I know; but why regret it? You have settled down into a quiet, happy man of family. There are no shadows now in your life, no rough places in the road you travel. Life has been all bright with you; but with me —

Mark. Ah, Cleb! you have tasted sorrow. No dear wife to cheer your home! How lonely it must be!

Hanson. It is, indeed, Mark. That it is lonely, desolate, is the reason of my being here to-night.

Mark. Well, I'm glad you came. Come often, Cleb. Make yourself at home with us: we'll try to cheer you. I'll call Kate down, and we'll have a pleasant evening together.

Hanson. One moment, Mark. I have a proposition to make to you.

Mark. Ah, indeed! Well, go ahead: if there's any thing I can do for you, you've only to say the words.

Hanson. My home is indeed desolate; and you can aid me in attempting to make it more cheerful. You have a daughter, Mark.

Mark. (*Aside.*) O Lord! he's found out Harry and Lilly are intimate. (*Aloud.*) Yes, a dear girl.

Hanson. She is indeed, — one who could make a home bright and happy.

Mark. (*Aside.*) Now, does he suppose I'm going to lose that little girl, and only sixteen? (*Aloud.*) That she could, and can in a few years.

Hanson. In a few years? She's quite old enough to marry.

Mark. Yes, in a few years.

Hanson. I want you to let her come to my house, — a bright, happy influence, to charm away the gloom which now shadows it.

Mark. Well, Cleb, I'm sure I don't know what to say. I've seen this thing growing, but hardly expected it would so soon blossom. They are very fond of each other.

Hanson. They! To whom do you refer?

Mark. Why, my Lilly and your Harry.

Hanson. My Harry?

Mark. Certainly. Ain't that what you are driving at? You want Harry and Lilly to make a match of it.

Hanson. Never.

Mark. Hallo! What do you want, then?

Hanson. I want your daughter Lilly in my house as — my wife.

Mark. The d—uce, you do!

Dick. The old catamaran!

Hanson. I have seen her often, admired her sweet and gentle disposition, and believe that in her I could find a solace for all my bitter hours.

Dick. 'Twould be a bitter pill for her!

Mark. Cleb, you must be jesting. You're old enough to be her father.

Hanson. And not too old to be her loving husband. I am in earnest, Mark. Give her to me. I will love and cherish her.

Mark. But she is so young.

Hanson. I will wait till she grows older: only promise she shall one day be mine.

Mark. I cannot do that. Her wishes must be consulted. She may not fancy you. I don't mean that. Hang me if I know what I do mean. You have taken me by surprise. The idea of your wanting to marry my daughter!

Hanson. If I should succeed in making her love me, would you then give your consent?

Mark. Well,—hang it, Cleb, I won't have any thing to do with this business. You must talk to Kate: she'll let you know what we'll do. I'll call her down, and leave you together. I've got an errand at John Fisher's store. I'll run down there, and you just drop in and let me know the upshot of this affair. (*Aside.*) Kate'll settle him: leave her alone for that. (*Exit, R.*)

Hanson. The same old easy Mark,—shifting the responsibility upon his wife. She's a harder customer to deal with; but I think I know a way by which even she

can be made to consent. The girl is lovely, bewitching, and I am determined to have her.

Enter MARK, with hat and coat, and KATE, R.

Mark (*speaking as he enters*). I won't be gone long. Here's an old friend wants a little private conversation with you.

Kate. Ah! Mr. Hanson, I'm glad to see you.

Hanson. Mrs. Ashton, this is indeed a pleasure. I declare, you are looking finely.

Mark. Isn't she, Cleb? She's a woman that always looks lovely; and her sweet, winning disposition — oh, my!

Kate. Mark, you're a giddy, good-for-nothing —

Mark. I know it; and you're a — But I can't stop to tell you: 'twould take too long. I'll be back soon. I won't apologize for running away, Cleb, for I know that's just what you want me to do. Kate will entertain you far better than I could (*aside*), and crush your hopes too, or I'm mistaken. (*Exit, L.*)

Dick. Old Hanson's got a batch that won't knead so easy, I reckon.

Kate. You see, Mr. Hanson, Mark is still the gay, lively soul you have always found him, in spite of the lapse of years.

Hanson. Yes, yes: as gay and lively as when he and I both fell in love with the same pretty girl, — Kate Stewart.

Kate. Ah, you still remember that?

Hanson. I shall never forget it. He, lucky dog, carried off the prize; while I —

Kate. Found a far richer prize to strive for, in the heart of Annie Clare. You won her heart ; and no better, truer wife ever blessed a man than she.

Hanson. She was a faithful wife ; but all her virtues could never efface the recollection of the love I bore you, Kate.

Kate. Mr. Hanson !

Hanson. Kate Ashton, you little know how great a sacrifice I made when I gave you up to Mark Ashton. Ay, gave you up ; for I had such influence over him, that, had I but spoken the word, you would never have been his wife. But I saw you loved him ; and, rather than have you suffer, I sacrificed my love, and gave you up. Kate, this happy home, this loving heart you prize so highly, is all my gift. May I not ask some return ?

Kate. Mr. Hanson, without acknowledging the gift you profess to have bestowed upon me, believing that the heart of Mark Ashton was all mine from the time we first met, beyond the power of any living man to wrest from me, may I inquire what return you covet ?

Hanson. Your daughter Lilly, growing up into the image of her I once so deeply loved. Give her to me. I ask you, Kate, to let her be my wife.

Kate. Caleb Hanson, are you mad ?

Hanson. As some atonement for what I suffered in losing you, I beg you give her to me. I will love her, cherish her ; her slightest wish shall command me. All that money can purchase shall be hers.

Kate. Caleb Hanson, no more of this. Lilly is but a child, too young to think of marriage, especially with a man of your age. When she is old enough to decide for herself, her choice will be mine.

Hanson. Oh! I will wait: only use your influence, and she may be led to look upon me as her future husband. That is all I ask.

Kate. You ask too much. If ever my influence is exerted; 'twill be to make her the wife of your son Harry. She can never be yours.

Dick. Buttered side down, Hanson!

Hanson. My son Harry! Do you mean to tell me that boy presumes —

Kate. He loves Lilly; of that I am sure. A mother's eyes are sharp. The young people are attached; and the best thing you can do, Caleb Hanson, is to laugh at your silly passion, and help me to make them happy.

Hanson. Never! I'll turn that insolent puppy into the street: he shall never have a penny of my money. He marry! The idle vagabond!

Kate. And who's to blame if he is idle? Have a care, Caleb: he's ambitious; he'll slip away from you before you know it; and what he attempts he has energy to pursue. You are making a boy of him, when his true heart is panting to do a man's work in the world. Ay, and he'll do it yet.

Hanson. So I've found a rival in my own son! and you — you sneer at me, and take his part. Have a care, Kate! I'm called a hard man. I never undertook any thing but what I succeeded; and I'll not fail in this. I will have that girl for my wife.

Kate. Not with my consent.

Hanson. Without it, then. Mark Ashton has one weakness that you dream not of. I know him better than you. Upon this I will work. You shall find your-

self neglected, your idol crumbling to dust, your pretty nest scattered to the winds, want staring you in the face ; and, when you are brought to your last loaf, perhaps my silly passion may find some recognition in your misery We shall meet again. (*Exit, L.*)

Kate. Can this be Caleb Hanson, — the quiet, gentle Caleb Hanson? What can he mean? One weakness I dream not of? But he sha'n't have Lilly. What slumbering demon have I awakened? Lilly his wife! — better neglect, want. Merciful Heavens! what terrible blow is about to fall upon us? He is a hard man, — relentless, implacable. He has some horrible purpose in his black heart. Let him do his worst. My child shall find a champion here, watchful and wary, to guard and protect her. His wife! While a mother can battle for her child — never! (*Exit, R.*)

Dick (*crawling from under the lounge*). Well, I've heard of the pursuit of knowledge under difficulties, but I had no idea so much knowledge could be found under a lounge. What an infernal scoundrel my respected master is, to be sure! The very in—in—in—carceration of diabolical wickedness. Marry Lilly Ashton! I'd like to see him attempt it. Harry will have a word to say about that. So the old man will turn Harry out of doors! I've no doubt of that; but he shall find a friend in Dick Bustle, or I'm no scholar. Lord, what a muddle this world is, anyhow! The old man's got the money, but we've got the brains; and it's Bustle's opinion that money in this heat will find itself buttered side down.

Tom. (*Outside.*) Now, P-P-P-atty, d-d-d-on't.

Patty. (*Outside.*) It's no use talking, Tom Chubb! I'm determined.

Dick. Hallo! Here's Chubbs, arter Patty. The darned stuttering lonkey! I'd like to hear th eir conversation; and, as this lounge appears to be a safe hiding-place, I'll try it again. (*Crawls under lounge.*)

Enter PATTY, followed by TOM CHUBBS, L.

Tom. P-P-P-atty J-J-J-ones, l-l-l-isten to the v-v-v-oice of af-f-f-ection that b-b-b-ubbles in this b-b-b-osom.

Dick. Bubbles! Sputters, I should say.

Tom. My t-t-t-ongue is we-we-we-ak; I ca-ca-ca-n't sp-p-p-eak my l-l-l-ove.

Dick. Then whistle it, my boy.

Patty. Oh, do go away, Tom Chubbs! Between the butcher and the baker, I'm heartily sick of this nonsense. If you've got any thing to say, speak up like a man.

Tom. D-d-d-idn't you p-p-p-romise to g-g-g-o with me to s-s-s-inging sc-sc-sc-hool?

Patty. Of course I did; and I'm ready to keep my promise.

Tom. D-d-d-idn't you p-p-p-romise to make me the ha-ha-ha-ppiest of me-me-me-n?

Patty. If going to singing-school is going to make you the happiest of men, I did.

Tom. Then s-s-s-ay you l-l-l-ove me.

Patty. I sha'n't say any thing of the sort. Can't I go to singing-school with you without loving you?

Tom. N-n-n-o. I c-c-c-an't spend my m-m-m-ouey without s-s-s-ome return, c-c-c-an I?

Patty. You mercenary butcher! Is not my company reward enough?

Tom. N-n-n-o, not quite. I want you to m-m-m-arry

m-m-m-e some time ; and, if you wo-wo-wo-on't m-m-m-arry m-m-m-e some time, w-w-w-hat's the use of s-s-s-pending m-m-m-oney, s-s-s-ay?

Dick. Chubbs ain't such a fool as I took him to be. Philosophy in a butcher's frock ! A sage of modern Greece !

Patty. Tom Chubbs !

Tom. M-m-m-am.

Patty. There's the door.

Tom. Y-y-y-es, m-m-m-am.

Patty. The quicker you place yourself on the other side of it, the better. You're a low, mean, greedy wretch ; and I'll never speak to you again as long as I live.

Dick. Buttered side down, Chubbs !

Patty. For the future, you'll leave your beef, mutton, poultry, and lard at the kitchen-door, and depart in silence.

Tom. Y-y-y-es, m-m-m-am. I-I-I unders-s-s-tand you. It's all the w-w-w-ork of that D-D-D-ick B-B-B-ustle : he's g-g-g-ained your af-f-f-ections, and now you w-w-w-ant to wh-wh-whistle me off.

Patty. Dick Bustle, indeed ! Do you think I would listen to that low baker ?

Dick (*crawling out*). I think you will, Patty.

Patty. Dick Bustle, you here ?

Dick. Accidentally, Patty. Quite accidentally.

Tom. C-c-c-onfound you, D-D-D-ick B-B-B-ustle ! you've b-b-b-en l-l-l-istening.

Dick. Very attentively, Chubbs. And I must say, it's very cruel to slight so much love, when it is such an effort to express it. Chubbs, let us be friends. There's

my hand. We are blighted beings. We have both showered our palpitating hearts upon the same object. Let us retire to some unfrequented spot, and there mingle our tears.

Patty. You're a couple of fools.

Dick. You hear that, Chubbs? Oh, how I loved that woman!

Chubbs. S-s-s-o did I.

Dick. The wealth of affection I lavished upon her!

Tom. S-s-s-o did I. T-t-t-two d-d-d-ollars f-f-f-or singing sc-sc-sc-hool.

Dick. Come, Chubbs, let's go. Patty Jones, farewell. You will repent this cruelty to one who loved not wisely, but too well. There will come a time when the still, small voice of conscience will whisper to you —

Patty. Shut up, you donkey.

Tom. C-c-c-ruel P-P-P-atty, f-f-f-arewell: my h-h-h-eart is b-b-b-roken, my hopes are b-b-b—

Dick. Buttered side down! Come on. (*Exeunt DICK and TOM, L.*)

Patty. Well, I've lost them both! This comes of having two strings to a bow. I don't care: there's as good fish in the sea as ever was caught; and I'm not going to break my heart for either of them. Dick Bustle is worth the catching; but as for that Tom Chubbs, if he ever shows his face here again, I'll scald him. The mean, contemptible wretch!

Enter MRS. A., R.

Mrs A. Patty, what's the matter? Who are you going to scald?

Patty. Only the cat, marm.

Mrs. A. And, pray, what has puss been doing now?

Patty. Upsetting every thing, as usual. Just let me catch him, that's all!

Mrs. A. Don't be angry, *Patty*. Poor thing, he knows no better.

Patty. I know that, marm; but I'll learn him better manners, or my name is not *Patty Jones*. The mercenary wretch! After I'd promised to go with him to singing-school too!

Mrs. A. The cat invite you to singing-school! Why, what are you talking about?

Patty. Indeed, marm, I don't know. It isn't the cat at all. It's *Tom Chubbs*.

Mrs. A. Oh! *Tom Chubbs*. Why, I thought *Dick Bustle* was the favorite.

Patty. So he was; but I changed my mind for *Tom Chubbs*: and now I've changed it again; and I won't have any thing to do with either of them. I'll scald *Chubbs* if he comes here again; and as for *Dick Bustle* —

Enter DICK, L.

Dick. White or brown, *Mrs. Ashton*? Square, brick, family, or twist?

Patty (*smiling*). Why, *Dick*! Back again?

Dick. Yes: I am back again. Business must be attended to; so, if you'll please give me the order for the morning bread, I'll be obliged to you, *Mrs. Ashton*.

Mrs. A. You know I always leave that to *Patty*, *Mr. Bustle*.

Patty. Come to the kitchen, *Mr. Bustle*, and I will give you the order.

Dick. Well, now, I don't know about that, Miss Jones. You've already kept me gallivantin' about this house for half an hour; and, if it's all the same to you, I'll stop here.

Patty. You're very fond of this room, ain't you? You like the furniture, the lounge, and the carpet under the lounge. Mrs. Ashton —

Dick. Patty, don't: let's go to the kitchen.

Patty. But I want to tell Mrs. Ashton where I found —

Dick. "The last rose of summer." Yes, I know; but come and give me the order for the bread. I'm in a dreadful hurry.

Patty. You always are. But come along, and we'll have a quiet chat in the kitchen. (*Exit, L.*)

Dick. Quiet chat! I don't like to trust myself alone with her, for she'll have me over ears in love with her again. But business must be attended to. (*Exit, L.*)

Mrs. A. I wonder where Mark can be. Caleb Hanson has made me very uneasy with his threats. Foolish threats; for I know that Mark is so noble and good, that he can have no power over him. But I wish he was safe at home.

Mark. (*Outside, L.*) 'Sno use talking, Cleb; I say you shall come in. We've had a jolly time, old boy, a jolly time; and we'll talk it over, and you sha'n't go — go home till morning, old boy, you sha'n't. Come along.

Enter MARK, intoxicated, leaning heavily on CALEB, his dress disordered.

Hallo, Kate! 'sthat you? This is Cleb Hanson! Glor'us fellow, Cleb Hanson. We've been having a

little punch, — a little punch, — ain't we, Cleb? Glor'us punch, — capital punch! It's a glor'us jolly time. It's like the good old times before we was married, ain't it, Cleb? I say, Cleb, it's too much for me. My head's a spinning round and round and round; but it's glor'us punch. Where's something to sit down on? The chairs are all dancing round! Wait a minute, till a-catch that lounge (*falls heavily on to the lounge*).

Kate. Why, Mark, Mark! what is the matter?

Mark. Matter! I's al'ight, I tell you; I's al'ight. It's the punch, — ain't it, Cleb, — he knows, don't you. Cleb? We both knows; for we're all jolly good fellows, we're all jolly good fellows, — we're all jolly — good — fellows. (*Falls asleep.*)

Kate. Caleb Hanson, what is the meaning of this?

Caleb. Why, isn't it plain? Your noble husband has been indulging a little, and, as he says, it's all right.

Kate. Caleb Hanson, you have been tempting my husband to drink.

Caleb. Well, tempting is a pretty hard word, Mrs. Ashton. I did invite him to drink, — something I have not done for years; for, before you knew him, there was a time when a glass of liquor would excite him to such a degree, that his only safety was in totally abstaining from its use. He has shunned it as he would poison. But now he is older and wiser; and, knowing that our families were to be united before long, I thought it best to test him. I told you I had great influence with him; that, in the old days, I could lead him as I pleased. You see I still have the power.

Kate. O man, man! Is there not pity in your heart! Can you so basely betray his trusting nature?

Caleb. Kate, I must have Lilly. Say the word, and to-morrow shall find Mark Ashton the man he was yesterday. Refuse, and you know the consequences.

Kate. Do your worst. You shall not have her.

Caleb. As you please. There lies your husband, drunk, and

Enter LILLY and HARRY, L.

I put the glass to his lips.

Harry. You! You did this?

Lilly (crossing to lounge) O father, father! What ails you, father?

Hanson. Boy, go home: you are not wanted here. Do you hear? Home, at once.

Harry. Just one word, before I obey you. Did you speak the truth when you said you put the glass to Mark Ashton's lips!

Hanson. What's that to you? Am I to be lectured by my own son?

Kate. O Harry! It is true! It is true!

Harry. Then to your home I go no more. I am no longer son of yours. I have borne insults from you that no father ever put upon the son he loved. I have been brought up in idleness, and made to feel the power of your will. I have been taunted with my dependence; but, from this time, I will depend upon my brains and hands alone to make a way in the world. You have cruelly wronged those who love me. You have placed the poisonous cup to the lips of a weak man, who trusted you. You have disgraced the name I bear; but, with heaven's help, I will clear the name you have so foully disgraced.

Hanson. Bah! Boyish sentiment. Go: beg, starve in the street, for that will be your end. Never look to me for aid, for I've done with you. You are no longer son of mine.

Enter BUSTLE, L.

Bustle (to Harry). Capt. Bangs is looking for you. It's to hear your answer. "No," I suppose.

Harry. You're wrong. It is "Yes:" I will go.

Bustle. You don't say so! Well, Bustle, you're not battered side down this time. I'm with you! Hurrah for China!

Kate. China!

Harry. Yes, Mrs. Ashton: I am about to accompany Capt. Bangs to China. It is the best, the only course I can pursue. He is my friend: he will care for me; and, with his help, I shall prosper. Bustle, you go with me?

Bustle. To be sure I do!

Lilly. O Harry! You're not going to leave us?

Harry. Lilly, I must go. Mrs. Ashton, let me say what my heart prompts. I love your daughter dearly, truly. It is a boy's love, which a man's heart shall cement. I know she loves me. May I not hope some day to return, and claim her for my wife?

Kate. O Harry! my heart is heavy with a new trouble. I know not how it may end; but, believe me, I love you with a mother's love. Go your way, make for yourself a name, as I know you will, and remember, that, rich or poor, when you ask it, Lilly Ashton shall be your wife.

Harry. Oh, heaven bless you!

Hanson. Kate Ashton, do you dare?

Kate. Dare, Caleb Hanson! I know you now. Bold, cunning, as you are, you have not conquered yet. A wife's love shall battle for the husband; a mother's love for the child. Scheme, work, tempt: do your worst. I feel my power, and Heaven's justice is always certain.

TABLEAU.

MARK on lounge, asleep. *extreme L.*, **HARRY** kneels at **LILLY'S** feet, *R.*, kissing her hand. **KATE**, *C.*, with finger pointed at **HANSON**, who stands *L.*, holding his hat in both hands, and looking fiercely at **KATE**. **DICK** *extreme L.* *Slow curtain.*

ACT SECOND.

SCENE. — *Room in MARK ASHTON'S house. Plain table, C. Plain chairs, R. and L. Lounge, R. Furniture all of the cheapest kind. MARK asleep on lounge. KATE sits on a low stool at his side, watching him.*

Kate. Another long weary night has gone; another bright, beautiful morning comes to make glad happy homes and hopeful hearts, but brings no joy to our blasted life. O Mark, Mark! would I had stood beside your grave, mourning the loss of my early love, years ago, ere I had lived to see you such a wreck. Five years, five bitter years, have passed since that fatal night when Caleb Hanson marked you for his victim. Heaven knows I warned you, that I strove to keep you from his

influence ; but you laughed at what you called my foolish fears ; still clung to him who led you, step by step, along the path of ruin. He spoke truly : first neglect, then poverty, — and such bitter poverty. No roof we can call our own, our little savings squandered, piece by piece our furniture sold to obtain bread, or, worse yet, the poison that has made the once noble father and husband a miserable drunkard. O Heaven be merciful to the wretched victims of a villain !

Enter LILLY, L., in hat and shawl ; KATE rises.

Lilly. O mother ! such a cruel disappointment ; and I had planned such a surprise for you.

Kate. A surprise, my child ?

Lilly. Yes, mother. Watching you growing feeble and careworn, working hard to keep the wolf from our door, — how wretchedly poor we are, — I felt it was time for me to try and do something for our support. So, three weeks ago, I called upon Mrs. Clarence, whose husband bought our dear old house, and asked her to assist me by allowing me to give her daughter instruction on the piano. She was very kind to me, and at once accepted my proposal. I was to have commenced this morning, she to pay the first quarter in advance. Judge of my disappointment, when I went there, to find that Mr. Clarence had become bankrupt, that the house had been sold yesterday to a gentleman recently returned from China. It was a cruel blow to my hopes, for I wanted to surprise you by placing in your hands my first earnings.

Kate. Lilly, darling, your thoughtful consideration is a source of pleasure to me.

Lilly. O mother! I do wish I could do something to help you.

Kate. Of that you have given proof. Who did you say had bought our old home?

Lilly. A gentleman from China. I didn't hear his name. O mother! perhaps he can give us some tidings of Harry.

Kate. I fear not, Lilly. Harry's long silence — not a line from him since his departure — is ominous of evil. He loved you so dearly that nothing but death could have so sealed his lips.

Lilly. Oh, don't say that, mother! The thought of his return is the only bright spot in the future to me.

Kate. We will hope for the best, my child. What is hidden in the sealed future, time alone can disclose. Its mysteries may be all the brighter when we reach them, because now enveloped in darkness, as the sun never seems to shine so gloriously as when bursting through the clouds that have obscured it.

Enter PATTY, R.

Patty. Mrs. Ashton, what am I to do for breakfast? There's neither bread nor butter, coffee nor tea, sugar nor molasses; the cat has drunk up all the milk, and the mice absconded with the last remnants of cheese. The grocer will not trust me, and the butcher declares we shall have nothing until his bill is paid.

Kate. Indeed, Patty, I don't know what to do.

Patty. We must have something to eat. Gracious goodness! there'll be nothing but skeletons left here, if we don't look out.

Kate. Patty, we have reached the end of our means. 'Tis useless for you to stay here any longer: you must know we cannot pay you.

Patty. Fiddlesticks! What do I care for pay?

Kate. You see we have nothing, not even food. It's your duty to look out for yourself.

Patty. What do I care for food? I can go without just as long as you can. It's my duty to care for those who have cared for me, who nursed me when I was sick, who gave me a good home, and made my life pleasant and happy, and forgot all about my being a hired girl. I was brought up in the woods of Maine. I'm nothing but a plain Yankee girl, but I know what's right. Misfortune came upon you when I was sharing your prosperity, and I'm not going to desert you now. If there's nothing in the house to eat, it's my duty to find something, and I'm going to do it. (*Going, L.*)

Kate. Stop, stop, Patty! My purse is not quite empty. Here's a dime; that will at least buy a loaf of bread.

Patty. H'm! A dry breakfast that'll make; but it's better than none. So with the last dime I'll get a loaf of bread. Gracious! I hope it won't be the last loaf.

(*Exit, L.*)

Kate. (*Aside.*) The last loaf! Has it come to that? Caleb Hanson said we should be brought to it; and then — Ah! let him come, let him come, to find his wicked arts have failed to loose from their embrace a mother's guarding arms.

Lilly. O mother, mother! what will become of us?

Kate (folding LILLY in her arms). Fear not, my child. Heaven guards us ever. Trust on.

“The darkest day,
Live till to-morrow, will have passed away.”

(*Exit, R.*)

Mark (muttering). Fill up! Fill up! Bumpers, boys, bumpers! (*Moves, and opens his eyes.*) Hallo! Where am I? Home! I thought I was at the head of the table, at Fowler's. Home! Cold as a barn. (*Sits up and looks round.*) But who made it, Mark Ashton? Who transfigured a beautiful home to this den? Who dragged a trusting wife down — down — to such a miserable hole? Who blasted a daughter's happiness? You, Mark Ashton! You, curse you! Oh! is there no oblivion? Can I never drown remorse? Drink deep as I will, there always comes this terrible awakening, with Kate's careworn face, and Lilly's downcast eyes, to tell me of my shame. O Death! will you never come to slay this Gorgon appetite, to hide this mockery of God's image away from the sight of man forever? (*Jumps up.*) Oh, I shall go mad! mad! mad! I cannot bear to look upon them; to read in their eyes my disgrace; to hear their sweet voices, that never reproach, speak loving words that scorch my wicked soul. I will away, ere they return. O wife, daughter! wronged, betrayed, neglected! pray, if you can, for the unhappy wretch who blasts and withers all your fondest hopes. Heaven knows he needs it, when his unhallowed thirst seeks to drown conscience with its greedy cry for drink — drink, — drink! (*Rushes out, L.*)

Enter PATTY, L., with a loaf of bread.

Patty. What sends Mr. Ashton tearing off in that style, at this early hour? After his morning dram, I s'pose. Well, let him go: a small loaf won't go a great ways in a large family, and one mouth the less to feed is a great saving. (*Puts loaf on the table.*) Heigho! what's to become of us? Nothing to do, and no friends to look to for help. What a miserable little loaf of bread. It's not at all like Dick Bustle's. Oh, dear! I wonder what's become of him. I s'pose he's made his fortune in China, and settled down with some little pigeon-toed China girl to keep house for him. Well, there's as good fish in the sea as ever was caught; but they don't nibble here, that's certain. (*Knock at door, L.*) Who's that? Come in.

Enter TOM CHUBBS, L.

Mercy sakes! It's Tom Chubbs!

Tom. P-p-p-atty J-j-j-ones, as I'm a s-s-s-inner!

Patty. Where in the world did you come from?

Tom. F-f-f-rom the c-c-c-orner. I've j-j-j-est o-o-o-p-ened a p-p-p-rovision s-s-s-tore.

Patty. Indeed! and want our custom, I s'pose.

Tom. Well, I d-d-d-o'no' b-b-b-out that. Mr. A-a-a-sh-ton's p-p-p-oor p-p-p-ay, ain't he?

Patty. What's that to you? He don't owe you any thing, does he?

Tom. P-p-p-atty J-j-j-ones, don't be so p-p-p-eppery He's p-p-p-oor, ain't he?

Patty. Poor! O Tom! the family are suffering They want help.

Tom. D-d-d-o they? Well, P-p-p-atty J-j-j-ones, I'm j-j-j-ust the m-m-m-an to h-h-h-elp, and I'll d-d-d-o it.

Patty. You will! Oh, thank you! You are indeed a friend.

Tom. Y-y-y-es, they shall have every th-th-th-ing they want.

Patty. O you dear Tom Chubbs! If you're not careful, I shall hug you.

Tom. D-d-d-o, P-p-p-atty. I'll be a w-w-w-illing v-v-v-ictim. L-l-l-isten to me. I'm in l-l-l-ove.

Patty. What, again?

Tom. N-n-n-o: it's the same o-o-o-ld l-l-l-ove,—as f-f-f-resh as n-n-n-ew l-l-l-aid eggs, as t-t-t-ender as sp-sp-sp-ring ch-ch-ch-ickens, and as st-r-r-ong as—as—as—

Patty. (*Aside.*) Old cheese, and green as your own cabbages. (*Aloud.*) And, pray, who is the object of this tender passion?

Tom. C-c-c-an you ask me? It's you, P-p-p-atty J-j-j-ones, d-d-d-ivine ch-ch-ch-armer.

Patty. Is it possible? Why, I thought I put an extinguisher on your ardent flame five years ago.

Tom. You did sm-sm-sm-other it a bit; b-b-b-ut it's b-b-b-urst out again. B-b-b-e my w-w-w-ife, P-p-p-atty J-j-j-ones. I've got a n-n-n-ice house, a n-n-n-ice l-l-little b-b-b-usiness, and a n-n-n-ice l-l-little s-s-s-um in the b-b-b-ank, and now I want a n-n-n-ice l-l-little w-w-w-ife.

Patty. Well, I'll think about it, Tom. In the mean time, as we've got nothing for breakfast, a good juicy steak would be very acceptable.

THE LAST LOAF.

Tom. P-p-p-atty J-j-j-ones, y-y-y-oi m-m-m-ust s-s-s-ay y-y-y-es or n-n-n-o b-b-b-efore I do any thing f-f-f-oi the f-f-f-amily.

Patty. What?

Tom. Only s-s-s-ay you'll have m-m-m-e, and I'll p-p-p-rove f-f-f-or the f-f-f-amily —

Patty. You will?

Tom. Yes : they shall have every th-th-th-ing — at the l-l-l-owest w-w-w-holes-s-s-ale p-p-p-ri-ce, for c-c-c-ash.

Patty. Tom Chubbs !

Tom. Y-y-y-es : I'll b-b-b-e g-g-g-enerous, t-t-t-oo. Take m-m-m-e, and I'll g-g-g-ive you a h-h-h-og.

Patty. I've no doubt you will, if I take *you*. Is this your boasted help?

Tom. It's h-h-h-ard t-t-t-imes, P-p-p-atty ; m-m-m-ust l-l-l-ook out f-f-f-or m-m-m-yself.

Patty. Then look out for yourself now, or you'll find harder times. There's the door ; if you're not out of it in a second, I'll smash your soft pate with that loaf of bread. (*Takes loaf from table.*)

Tom. B-b-b-ut, P-p-p-atty —

Patty. Clear out, you mean, miserable skinflint. Clear, I say ! (*Throws loaf at him as he runs off, L.*) Was there ever such a — (*TOM enters, L., with the loaf.*)

Tom. You've d-d-d-ropped s-s-s-omething, P-p-p-atty.
- (*PATTY rushes at him, he drops loaf and exits, L.*)

Patty. You jest show yourself here again, Tom Chubbs, — that's all. What hateful things men are, any way. I'd just like to have one of them try to make love to me again, — that's all. I never want to see a man

again as long as I live, or hear the sound of his voice.

Dick. (*Outside, L.*) Now, then, what is it? White or brown? Either, both, or neither? (*Enters, L., with a basket on his arm.*) Brick, square, family, twist, rolls, or muffins?

Patty. Why, it's Dick Bustle! O you dear old Dick! (*Runs into his arms, and clasps him about the neck.*)

Dick. It is that distinguished individual, sure enough.

Patty. Where did you come from? Where have you been? Where's Harry Hanson?

Dick. To your first interrogatory, Patty, I reply, — China. To your second, my answer is, — China. To your third, — China. So you see for your *where* you've a full set of China.

Patty. I'm so glad to see you. But why haven't you written?

Dick. Oh! I left all that to Harry.

Patty. But we haven't heard a word from either of you since you left.

Dick. Is that so? Well, it's evident that my late respected employer has been sticking his fingers into other people's dough.

Patty. What do you mean, Dick?

Dick. No matter now: tell me, how are all the folks? It strikes me that this is rather a cheap place for a man of so fine a taste as Mark Ashton.

Patty. Why, Dick, haven't you heard? Mr. Ashton is a confirmed sot. He has squandered all his property, and the family are now —

Dick. As I used to say, buttered side down. Well, I'm sorry, for Mark was a good fellow.

Patty. You'd scarce believe it, Dick; but, at this moment, every bit of food we have in the house is that single loaf of bread.

Dick. Well, that's a dreadful mean-looking loaf. It looks scared, don't it? Quite a curiosity. Give that to me, Patty: or rather let me exchange it for one of mine. I should like to preserve that. (*Takes loaf from his basket.*) Now, there's an article worth looking at. You'll find there's no short weight about it when it's cut. (*Exchanges loaves.*) So you say the family are real poor?

Patty. Indeed, indeed they are!

Dick. Well, how about you, Patty? Married yet?

Patty. No, indeed.

Dick. Well, I suppose not, from the garroting you gave me when I came in. Engaged?

Patty. Indeed, I'm not.

Dick. You'll excuse my speaking of it; but I met Tom Chubbs out here, flying away, and I didn't know but what it was "upon the wings of love" that are spoken of occasionally.

Patty. No, indeed! He's opened a provision store round the corner, and dropped in to acquaint us with the fact.

Dick. Well, then, I shall have the pleasure of giving our old friend Tom an order for as much of his stock as I can conveniently bring here in that basket.

Patty. O Dick! That is so like you, — ever thoughtful of those in distress.

Dick. Patty, I've been knocked about the world considerable since I left you, five years ago. I haven't made much headway in becoming a scholar; but I've found that a warm heart and a willing hand are worth all the learning in creation, and that the world has more need of philanthropists than philosophers. No friends of mine shall want while I have a penny in my pocket. I'm going to set up a provisional government here. You shall be chief cook, and I'll be chief butler.

Patty. O Dick! I'm proud of you.

Dick. That's comforting, Patty; for I've come back brim-full of love for you, and I want you to marry me.

Patty. O Dick! you're so abrupt.

Dick. Well, I always was; but this won't do. I must go and fill up the basket.

Patty. Let me go with you?

Dick. Delighted to have your company.

Patty. Let me run and tell Mrs. Ashton and Lilly that you have come: they'll be so glad to see you, and hear something from Harry. Why, Dick, you haven't told me a word about him.

Dick. And I don't mean to, just now. Now, you come with me. Don't say any thing to Mrs. Ashton at present. I have my reasons.

Patty. If you don't tell me something about him, we shall quarrel.

Dick. No, Patty, we mustn't quarrel; that is, — until after we are married.

Patty. And do you flatter yourself I'm going to marry you?

Dick. Well, we can't tell what may happen. Do

you remember what you said when I went away? That you wouldn't marry me if there wasn't another man in the world.

Patty. Did I? But, Dick, that was five years ago and, besides, I've changed my mind.

Dick. O Patty Jones, Patty Jones! Come to my arms and fill my soul — No : business before pleasure, — let's go and fill the basket. (*Exit, L.*)

Enter MARK ASHTON, L.

Mark. Not a drop, — not a drop! Morgan has shut down! No more credit, — no money, no liquor. Have I fallen so low that I am refused a drop of liquor to quench the thirst that is strangling me? I must have it! My pockets are empty, — emptied into Morgan's till. There's nothing here worth pawning. I must have it, — at least one glass. Perhaps Kate has a shawl, or Lilly a bonnet. O wretch, wretch! Would you rob your own wife and daughter of their poor clothing? I must have something. What's this? bread, — bread, — to mock my thirst. I'll throw it into the street. No, no, no! there's money in it. Morgan will give me a glass for that. He can't refuse, for he robs the poor of their bread every day. Lucky thought. I'll try it. (*Takes loaf, and goes towards door, L.*) Who's this? Caleb Hanson! I can't meet him with this under my arm. He's coming this way. I'll wait till he is gone. (*Throws himself upon lounge.*) Oh, this maddening thirst!

Enter KATE, followed by LILLY, R.

Kate. I thought I heard your father moving; but he still sleeps.

Lilly. O mother! when and how will this end?

Kate. With his life, my child. See what a wreck your once noble father has become. Wretched as we are, his life is a thousand times more miserable. Oh, if he could be made to realize his condition! If one spark of his once noble manhood could be kindled, there would be hope for him.

Lilly. Mother, he must see how you are suffering. he must know that we are without means to live. 'Tis too hard for you, brought up with every comfort about you, to be reduced to this poverty, with but a single loaf of bread in the house, and no means to get another.

Kate. We will eat that contentedly, and not repine at the ways of Providence. He was the best of fathers, the best of husbands, in prosperity; and even in our wretchedness not one unkind word has passed his lips.

Lilly (*kissing MARK on the forehead*). Dear, dear father: if you only knew how dearly we love you!

Kate (*sits at R. of table*). Heaven send us some help in our sore distress.

Mark (*mutters as if in sleep*). And I would have robbed them of their last morsel. O wretch, accursed wretch!

Lilly (*putting her arm about KATE's neck*). Poor mother! At last you sink beneath the burden. (*Knock, L.*) Come in.

Enter CALEB HANSON, L.

Caleb. Ah! Good-morning, ladies. I trust I see you well, Mrs. Ashton, — and Lilly, too; how charming you are looking!

Kate. (*Starts up.*) Caleb Hanson, leave my house.

Caleb. Your house! I beg your pardon; I was not aware that Mark Ashton or his wife were owners of real estate. This house is mine: I bought it yesterday.

Kate. Still hunting your victims.

Caleb. No: looking after my friends, that's all. I bought the house yesterday, and with it a bill for a month's rent now due. I called in to collect it.

Kate. We have not a penny we can call our own.

Caleb. I am glad of that.

Kate. I suppose you are.

Caleb. Just sitting down to breakfast too? Perhaps to your last loaf?

Kate. It is our last loaf. You are glad of that too.

Caleb. I am; for now I am nearing the consummation of my wishes. Now you will let me be your friend.

Kate. Friend! You?

Caleb. Yes, friend. You have seen how strong a foe I can be. I was a true prophet five years ago, — was I not? It's all turned out just as I said. I told you my influence could make Mark a drunkard, — could beggar you, — could bring you to your last crust.

Kate. You have performed all you promised. What next?

Caleb. 'Tis time you had a change. All this was brought about because you refused to give me your daughter. Give her to me now, and I will rebuild all I have destroyed. To-morrow you shall go to your old home; comforts shall spring up about you; every wish shall be gratified; your husband shall be reclaimed, and all made bright and happy.

Kate. And you could do all this?

Caleb. Do you doubt it?

Kate. No! I know the power of an inflexible will I know the power of money at a strong man's command, but I tell you, Caleb Hanson, if you could do all this, — if you could give me the dearest wish of my heart, — my husband restored to manhood again, — the price to be my daughter's hand, my answer would still be, Never, — never!

Caleb. Still stubborn? I must go farther, then, — drive you into the street, homeless and houseless.

Lilly. O mother, mother!

Kate. Still, with my protecting arms about my child, I would defy you.

Caleb. Farther yet: Mark Ashton is now a drivelling drunkard. I'll drive him into crime. He shall be a hunted felon.

Kate. O Heaven, be merciful!

Caleb. I have the power.

Mark (*springs from sofa, takes centre of stage, with finger pointed at Caleb*). Caleb Hanson, you lie!

Kate. } **Mark!**

Lilly. } (*Together.*) **Father!**

Caleb. } **Ashton!**

Mark. Your power is gone, never to return. I know you now, smooth-tongued hypocrite.

Caleb. Mark, you're drunk.

Mark. False again, Caleb. I haven't been so sober for five years. To-day I cannot get a drop.

Caleb. Oh, I see! your nerves are unstrung, Mark. (*Takes out money.*) Here, — here's money. Go get

something. You really need it. Get something quick.

Mark. Too late, Caleb. Put up your money. Tempt er, your power is gone. A few moments ago I was creeping out of this house with a loaf of bread under my arm, going to sell it for a glass of liquor, — the last loaf my poor wife and child had to keep them from starving. Stealing the bread from their mouths to feed my unholy appetite. The last loaf, Caleb, — don't it make you shudder? I saw you coming; and, ashamed to meet my friend, — my friend, Caleb, — I slunk back, back here. I heard my wife's sweet voice; I felt my daughter's kiss; I heard a tale of villany from your lips. I wouldn't believe my own wife, when she told me; but you, my friend, I must believe.

Caleb. Well, and what are you going to do about it?

Mark. Protect my child.

Caleb. Ah, indeed! fit protector you, — a broken-down drunkard.

Mark. Caleb Hanson, I believe there is a time in every weak man's life, when the hand of Providence is put forth, when a warning voice comes, "Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther." I believe that time has come to me, — the time to break my chains, and free myself. Heaven aid me! I will heed the warning. You, you, who have made me what I am, hear the vow, — Never, never shall the accursed poison touch my lips again!

Kate. O Mark, Mark! my own Mark again.

Lilly. Father, dear, dear father!

Mark (*folding them in his arms*). Now, Caleb Hanson, come and take my daughter.

Caleb. You will take your daughter and your wife out of my house at once. I'll drive you from town as a vagabond and a drunkard.

Mark. Have a care, Hanson,—have a care. It's as much as I can do to keep my fingers from your throat. We'll leave your house,—never fear; but, before I go, you, who so delight in noble acts, witness our morning meal. (*Takes loaf from table.*) 'Tis the last remnant of my life of shame,—our last loaf, of which I would have robbed these dear ones. But now I can share it with them; and, with the vow of repentance upon my lips, Heaven will bless it. (*Breaks the loaf, and pieces of gold fall upon floor.*)* What magic's here? (*Snatching up pieces, and letting them fall through his fingers.*) Gold,—gold,—gold!

Caleb. Confusion! Who has dared to interfere with my plans?

Enter DICK BUSTLE, with basket, L., followed by PATTY.

Dick. Dick Bustle, I expect: it's just like him.

Mark. What, Dick! Dick Bustle? (*Shakes hands.*)

Kate. Old friend, welcome home! (*Shakes hands.*)

Lilly. O Dick, Dick, how glad I am to see you!

Caleb. Confound the blunderhead!

Dick (*placing basket on table*). Thank you. Thank you all.

Mark. Explain this mystery, Dick.

Dick. Mystery! Why, that's a good loaf of bread, ain't it?

* To prepare the loaf, cut in two, perpendicularly, a round loaf; remove enough of the inside to hold the "gold"; then fasten the two halves, by passing around it horizontally an elastic band.

Mark. Yes; but the contents

Dick. Oh! the stuffin'? Well, it's a pretty long story, and, as Mr Hanson seems to be in a hurry, perhaps I'd better —

Patty. No, no, Dick: we're dying to hear it.

Dick. Well, then, five years ago two individuals went off to China.

Lilly. Yes! You and my Harry.

Dick. Exactly, Lilly: your Harry. Mr. Hanson, I beg you to take notice that the young lady says her Harry.

Patty. Do go on, Dick.

Dick. Well, this Harry was a driver, I tell you. No sooner had we landed, than he was snapped up by an English house, and given an important position. Wasn't he smart? Why, there wasn't his equal there, — such a hand at bargains, and such luck, — every thing he took hold of turned to gold; but the first money he made was enclosed in a neat envelope, and sent home, directed to Mrs. Kate Ashton.

Kate. I have never received it.

Dick. You haven't! I beg you to take notice, Mr. Hanson, that she says she never received it.

Hanson. What's this to do with me?

Dick. You'll find out, my late respected employer This envelope was followed by many more.

Kate. Which were never received.

Dick. I suppose not. You see a friend of this Harry was one day forced to take refuge under a lounge, where he overheard a conversation between certain parties

concerning certain other parties; and he and Harry made up their minds the money would be welcome.

Patty. That was you who hid under the lounge, Dick

Dick. Exactly; but, as you know, the money never came to hand. I beg you to take notice, Mr. Hanson —

Patty. O Dick, do go on!

Dick. I have little more to say. A year ago, Harry was taken into the English house as a partner. Hearing nothing from his dispatches, he commanded me, his inseparable companion, to look them up. I am here for that purpose. The loaf was a little invention of mine, to block my late respected employer's game. I made the loaf, but another party supplied the stuffin'.

Lilly. O Dick, Dick! and that other party —

Enter HARRY HANSON, L.

Harry. Will answer for himself. Lilly, Lilly, my darling!

Lilly. O Harry! Dear, dear Harry! (*Rushes into his arms.*)

Kate. My dear, dear boy, welcome home!

Mark. Harry, my boy, God bless you!

Harry. Thanks for your kind greeting. This is indeed a happy moment.

Dick. Harry, there's your father.

Harry (turning to HANSON). Father! that man is not my father. His hands are steeped in crime. He has dragged his dearest friend to ruin. He has forfeited all right to the child he drove from his doors. Repentance alone can wash the stains from that man's soul.

Hanson (to himself, with feeling). The boy speaks plain. I have done all this. I have planned and plotted ruin. I have stepped between him and his love. I have committed felony in intercepting his letters. I could have borne it all, — all its penalties, — but to see my own son turn coldly from his father — I thought I hated him; but now I would give all my wealth to feel the clasp of his hand, to look into his face, and read there some token of love. Ah, well, — as we sow, so must we reap. Foiled everywhere, what is there left for me? (*Turns and slowly goes out, L.; the others stand watching him as he goes.*)

Harry. My own father! Oh, this is hard to bear!

Kate. Cheer up, my boy. Though he who should be your best friend has deserted you, there are warm hearts here.

Harry. I know it, Mrs. Ashton. You told me you would be my mother, — that Lilly should be my wife.

Kate. No, Harry, — that her choice should be mine.

Harry. Ah! then it is useless for me to ask any more questions, for I read her answer in her eyes. Do I not, Lilly?

Lilly. O Harry! you have the most truthful eyes I ever looked into.

Harry. Dick, old friend, you found my remittances had been appropriated by another party.

Dick. Yes, Harry; by my late respected employer. He must be made to fork over.

Harry. In good time, Dick. But now I have other matters to occupy my attention.

Dick. And so have I. Patty Jones is very anxious to change her name.

Harry. And you are anxious to have her. Well, Patty, you can't do better.

Patty. Thank you, Master Harry. I'm exactly of your opinion, — ain't I, Dick?

Dick. If you're not, then I'm buttered side down.

Mark. Harry, there is no need of my telling you our past experience. You read it in my altered looks, — in the wreck of a once proud man.

Harry. Mr. Ashton, say no more. I know every thing. "Let the dead past bury its dead." Your old home is waiting for you. Every thing is just as it was when you left it.

Lilly. Our old home! Then you are —

Dick. The gentleman from China, Lilly.

Mark. Our old home again? I feel like a new man, wife. Heaven has dealt kindly with me, to give me these kind friends after my wasted life.

Kate. Ah, Mark, you have suffered deeply. Let us hope there are better times in store for us.

Mark. I trust there are, Kate. My reformation cannot be accomplished in an hour. I must suffer from that accursed appetite, — must struggle to overcome it: be ever near me, lest I should fall.

Kate. Fear not, Mark: we will surround you in our dear old home with such loving hearts that temptation shall have no power to harm you.

Mark. Ay, gather about me close, — wife, daughter son. In the hours of darkness, when temptation assails

me, let me lean upon your true hearts to gather courage ; for there are no trustier guards than loving hearts, — no stronger citadel than “ Home, sweet Home.”

TABLEAU.

MARK, C., *with his left arm around KATE's waist, his right hand over HARRY and LILLY, who kneel, R. DICK and PATTY, arm in arm, L. Music, “Home, sweet Home,” as the curtain slowly falls.*

CONTENTS OF READING-CLUB NO. 3.

Appeal in Behalf of American Liberty.	Mosquitoes.
Ambition.	Mr. Stiver's Horse.
Auction Mad.	Ode.
Aurelia's Unfortunate Young Man.	Old Fogy Man, The.
Ballad of the Oysterman, The.	Pat and the Oysters.
Bob Cratchit's Christmas-Dinner.	Recantation of Galileo, The.
Bone and Sinew and Brain.	Roast Pig. A Bit of Lamb.
Bunker Hill.	Roman Soldier, The.
Burial of the Dane, The.	Riding down.
Church of the Best Licks, The.	Schneider's Tomatoes.
Countess and the Serf, The.	School of Reform, Scenes from the.
Deck-Hand and the Mule, The.	Similia Similibus.
Evils of Ignorance, The.	Singer, The.
First Snow-fall, The.	Solemn Book-Agent, The.
Flower-mission, Junior, The.	Sons of New England, The.
For Love.	Speech of the Hon. Perverse Peabody on the Acquisition of Cuba.
Fra Giacomo.	Temperance.
How Persimmons took Cah ob der Baby.	Twilight.
Jonesville Singin' Quire, The.	Two Loves and a Life.
Last Tilt, The.	Two Births.
Lay of Real Life, A.	Uncle Reuben's Baptism,
Law of Kindness, The.	Victories of Peace, The.
Losses.	Wedding-Fee, The.
Mad Luce.	Wolves, The.
Minute-men of '75, The	What the Old Man said.

CONTENTS OF READING-CLUB NO. 4.

Battle Flag of Sigurd, The.	Minot's Ledge.
"Business" in Mississippi.	Mother's Fool.
Bell of Atri, The.	Mr. O'Hoolahan's Mistake.
Cane-bottomed Chair, The.	Mr. Watkins celebrates.
Cobbler's Secret, The.	My Neighbor's Baby.
Cuddle Doon.	Palmetto and the Pine, The.
Custer's Last Charge.	Pip's Flight.
Daddy Worthless.	Post-Boy, The.
Decoration.	Pride of Battery B, The.
Dignity of Labor, The.	"Palace o' the King, The."
Elder Sniffle's Courtship.	Paper don't Say, The.
Goin' Somewhere.	Penny ye meant to gi'e, The.
Grandfather.	Question, A.
He Giveth His Beloved Sleep.	Robert of Lincoln.
Hot Roasted Chestnut, The.	Song of the Dying, The.
House-top Saint, The.	St. John the Aged.
"Hunchback," Scene from the.	Tramp, The.
Indian's Claim, The. *2	Tom.
Joan of Arc.	Two Portraits.
Leedle Yawcob Strauss.	Village Sewing Society, The.
Little Black-eyed Rebel, The.	Way Astors are Made, The.
Little Hero, The.	What is a Minority?
Little Shoe, A.	Widder Green's Last Words.
Lost Cats, The.	William Tell.
Mary Maloney's Philosophy.	Zenobia's Defence.

CONTENTS OF READING-CLUB No. 5.

A Blessing on the Dance.	Noble Revenge.
A Charge with Prince Rupert.	Not Dead, but Risen.
A Mysterious Disappearance.	"One of the Boys."
Art-Matters in Indiana.	Scene from "London Assurance."
A Rhine Legend.	Scene from "The Marble Heart."
A Watch that "Wanted Cleaning."	Sideways.
An Exciting Contest.	Somebody's Mother.
An Indignation-Meeting.	Something Spilt.
An Irish Wake.	Tact and Talent.
Ballad of a Baker.	The Amateur Spelling-Match.
Ballad of Constance.	The Blue and Gray.
Ballad of Ronald Clare.	The Bridge.
Between the Lines.	The Canteen.
Burdock's Goat.	The Dead Doll.
Butterwick's Weakness.	The Flood and the Ark.
Dot Baby off Mine.	The Honest Deacon.
Edith helps Things along.	The Kaiser's Feast.
Failed.	The Little Shoes did it.
Faithful Little Peter.	The Scotchman at the Play.
Five.	The Seven Ages.
From the Sublime to the Ridiculous.	The Two Glasses.
Good-By.	Tired Mothers.
"If We Knew."	Uncle Remus's Revival Hymn.
Last Redoubt.	Whistling in Heaven.
Mollie, or Sadie?	Why Biddy and Pat got Married.

CONTENTS OF READING-CLUB No. 6.

A Disturbance in Church.	One Touch of Nature.
A Disturbed Parent.	Paddy O'Raffther.
A Christmas Carol.	Putty and Varnish.
A Miracle.	Reserved Power.
"A Sweeter Revenge."	Ship-Boy's Letter.
An Irish Love-Letter.	Sweet Singer of Michigan.
Behind Time.	Tacking Ship off Shore.
Blind Ned.	Tammy's Prize.
Cavalry Charge, The.	Talk about Shooting.
Clerical Wit.	Ten Years after.
"Conquered at Last."	The Benediction.
Count Eberhard's Last Foray.	The Changed Cross.
Deaf and Dumb.	The Fan Drill.
Der Shoemaker's Poy.	The Farmer's Story.
Down with the Heathen Chinee!	The Fountain of Youth.
Fight at Lookout.	The King's Kiss.
Fireman's Prayer.	The Palmer's Vision.
Greeley's Ride.	The Sergeant of the Fiftieth.
Great Future.	The Well-Digger.
Immortality.	"Them Yankee Blankits."
Joe's Bespeak.	They Met.
John Chinaman's Protest.	Virginus to the Roman Army.
Jim Lane's Last Message.	Warning to Woman.
Mr. Coville proves Mathematics.	Weaving the Web.
Nationality.	Widow Stebbins on Homœopathy.

CONTENTS OF READING-CLUB NO. 7.

A College Widow.	Last Hymn.
A Free Seat.	Left Alone at Eighty.
A Humorous Dare-Devil.	Maud's Misery.
All's Well that ends Well.	National Game.
A London Bee Story.	New Dixie.
A Modern Heroine.	On the Channel-Boat.
A Modern Sermon.	Orient Yourself.
A Reminiscence.	Paddle Your Own Canoe.
A Royal Princess.	Patriot Spy.
Ave Maria.	Pledge to the Dead.
Civil War.	Pomological Society.
Creeds of the Bells.	Rhymes at Random.
"Dashing Rod," Trooper.	San Benito.
Down Hill with the Brakes off.	St. Leon's Toast.
Drawing Water.	That Calf.
Family Portraits.	The Carpenter's Wooing, and the
Fool's Prayer.	Sequel.
Greatest Walk on Record.	The Dead Student.
Hannibal at the Altar.	The Ladies.
"He giveth His Beloved Sleep."	The Pin.
Hohenlinden.	The Retort.
How Neighbor Wilkins got Religion.	The Singers' Alms.
How Randa went over the River.	This Side and That.
Irish Boy and Priest.	Two Fishers.
Jimmy Butler and the Owl.	Uncle Mellick dines with his Master.
Jim Wolfe and the Cats.	

CONTENTS OF READING-CLUB NO. 8.

A Brick.	Lanty Leary.
A Colored Debating Society.	Last of the Sarpints.
Along the Line.	Legend of the White Hand.
A New Version of the Parable of the	London Zoölogical Gardens.
Virgins.	Masked Batteries.
An Evangel.	Miss Edith's Modest Request.
Annie's Ticket.	Mrs. Brown at the Play.
Apples — A Comedy.	Old Grimes.
A Sermon for the Sisters.	People will laugh.
A Thirsty Boy.	Peril of the Mines.
Aunt Phillis's Guest.	Parody on "Father William."
Ballad of the Bell-Tower.	Patter of the Shingle.
"Christianos ad Leones!"	Paul Clifford's Defence.
City Man and Setting Hen.	Shiftless Neighbor Ball.
Daisy's Faith.	Song of the Mystic.
De 'Sperience ob Reb'rend Quacko	The Baron's Last Banquet.
Strong.	The Captive.
Defence of Lucknow.	The Dilemma.
Dutch Security.	The Divorce Feast.
Fast Mail.	The Farmer and the Barrister.
Father William.	The Man with a Bear.
From One Standpoint.	The Story of the Tiles.
Girl of the Crisis.	The Outlaw's Yarn.
Grave of the Greyhound.	The Rich Man and the Poor Man.
Indian Warrior's Defence.	Two Dreams.
Labor is Worship.	Yankee Courtship.

CONTENTS OF READING-CLUB NO. 9.

Antoinette.
Antony to Cleopatra.
Awfully Lovely Philosophy.
Calif, The.
Check.
Claribel's Prayer.
Cleopatra Dying.
Dagger Scene from "The Wife,"
The.
Dandy Fifth, The.
Don Squixet's Ghost.
Gingerbread.
Hannah.
"He and She."
Hero Woman, The.
Holly Branch, The.
Jan Steener's Ride.
Johnny on Snakes.
King's Bell, The.
Legend of Saint Barbara, The.
Legend of the Organ-BUILDER.
Life in Death.
Little Girl's Song, The.
Lookout Mountain.
Loves of Lucinda.
Man Wich didn't drink Wotter, The.

Make the Best of Every Thing.
Marked Grave, The.
Marriage of Santa Claus, The.
Mice at Play.
No Color Line in Heaven.
Night Watch.
Old Man's Dreams, An.
One-legged Goose, The.
Owl Critic, The.
"Papa says so too."
Poetry of Iron, The.
Right must win, The.
Reviving de Sinners.
Selling the Farm.
Setting a Hen.
She would be a Mason.
Similar Case, A.
Sleep, The.
Song of the North, The.
Spinning-wheel, The.
Time.
Tomato, The.
Tramp of Shiloh, The.
Very Naughty Little Girl's Views.
Widow of Nain, The.

CONTENTS OF READING-CLUB NO. 10.

Autumn Leaves.
Autumn Thoughts.
Baffled Book-Agent, The.
Banker and the Cobbler, The.
Brudder Johnson on 'Lectricity.
Building and Being.
Carcassonne.
Chain of Gold, The.
Charge of the Heavy Brigade.
Christmas Elegy, A.
Clown's Baby, The.
Confession, The.
Conversion of Col. Quagg.
Court Lady, A.
Cruise of the "Monitor," The.
Death of the Old Wife.
Death of Steerforth.
Garfield.
Hark!
How the Colonel took It.
Intensely Utter.
Jackdaw of Rheims, The.
Mate of the "Betsy Jane," The.
Nebuchadnezzah.
No Time like the Old Time.

No Yearning for the Beautiful.
"Ole Marster's" Christmas.
Our Baby.
Parting Lovers, The.
Penitent, A.
Purpose, A.
Round of Life, The.
Ramon.
Rather Embarrassing.
Ravenswood's Oath.
Robert Emmett's Last Speech.
Saving Mother.
Scene from "Mary Stuart."
Serenade, The.
Sharpshooter's Miss, The.
Sooner or Later.
Story of a Stowaway, The.
Squire Houston's Marriage Ceremony.
The Way Rube Hoffenstein sells.
This means You, Girls.
Tickled All Oafer.
Union of Blue and Gray.
Widow to Her Son, The.
Wild Weather Outside.
Young Grimes. "

CONTENTS OF READING-CLUB No. 11.

Abraham Lincoln and the Poor Woman.	Nearer Home.
Big Ben Bolton.	No Precedent.
Blvouac of the Dead, The.	Old Man goes to Town, The.
Captain's Tale, The.	O'hello.
Cataract of Lodore, The.	"Mebbe," Joe's True Feesh Story.
Charge at Valley Maloy, The.	Paddy's Metamorphosis.
Child's Evening Prayer, The.	Pat's Bondsman.
Clear Bargain, A.	Pericles to the People.
Closing Scene, The.	"Picciola."
Convent Robbing.	Red O'Neil, The.
Countersign was "Mary," The.	Reflections on the Needle.
Crutch in the Corner.	Roland Gray.
Drifted Out to Sea.	Second Review of the Grand Army.
"Fall In."	Silver Cup, The.
For Life and Death.	Snow-storm, The.
Glimpse of Death, A.	Speculation.
Going towards Sundown.	Suckers on de Corn.
Garibaldi and His Companions.	"Treadwater Jim."
Kelly's Ferry.	Unforgotten Foe, The.
Last upon the Roll.	Variegated Dogs.
Leedle Yawcob Strauss: What He says.	Virginny.
Magnificent Poverty.	Washee, Washee.
Mr. Murphy explains His Son's Conduct.	What saved the Union.
Mysterious Rappings.	Wonderful Tar Baby Story, The.
	Wreck of the White Ship.
	Yawcob Strauss.

CONTENTS OF READING-CLUB No. 12.

Æsthetic Housekeeper, The.	Lucille's Mistake.
Asking the Gov'nor.	Making Love in the Choir.
Asleep at the Switch.	Memory.
Awkward.	Money Musk.
Bad Mix, A.	Mike McGaffaty's Dog.
Boys Who Never got Home, The.	Nancy Sykes.
Concurrent Testimony.	New Church Doctrine, The.
Cruise of the "Nancy Jane," The.	Night after Christmas, The.
Discontented Pendulum, The.	"Norval."
Doctor's Wedding, The.	Old Knight's Treasure, The.
Enoch of Calaveras, The.	Only a Crippled Soldier.
Fire! Fire!	Pat and the Pig.
Fire-Worshippers, The.	Pegging Away.
Funny Small Boy, The.	Penn's Monument.
Good-by, Proud World.	Policeman's Story, The.
How Dennis took the Pledge.	Postilion of Nagold, The.
How He Made It.	Public Grindstone, The.
How Tim's Prayer was answered.	Scene from "Leah the Forsaken."
House that Jack built, The.	Soldiers' Monument, The.
Ideal of Woman, An.	Signing the Pledge.
I have drank my Last Glass, Boys.	Sun-Burst.
Jack at All Trades, A.	The Three Little Chairs.
Judge Pitman's Watch.	Two Ways of Telling a Story.
Katie's Answer.	Veterans, The.
Little Presbyterian Maid, The.	War with Alcohol, The.
Little Rocket's Christmas.	

CONTENTS OF READING-CLUB NO. 13.

Apele for Are to the Sextant, A.
 Art is Pitiless.
 "Assorted" Declamation, An.
 Auction Extraordinary.
 Bob.
 Candor.
 Chicken Talk.
 Choosing a Cow.
 Christmas Ballad, A.
 Cold Water.
 Colored Sermon, A.
 Death of Mogg Megone, The.
 Death of the Dominie, The.
 Death of Thomas Becket, The.
 Drinking a Tear.
 Eaglet and the Child, The.
 Goin' to Liza's.
 Gridiron, The.
 How Vera Cruz was won.
 "Jesus, Lover of My Soul."
 Lady Yeardley's Guest.
 Little Elfin's Plea.
 "Little Potter's" Story.
 "Make It Four, Yer Honor."
 Middlerib's Rheumatic Cure.

Mount of the Holy Cross, The.
 Mr. Collins's Croquet-Set.
 Old Maid's Prayer, The.
 Old Twine String, The.
 "O'Meara Consolidated," The.
 Orphan Boy, The.
 "Peace, Be Still."
 Piece of Bunting, A.
 Planchette.
 Political Outfit, A.
 Popping Corn.
 Railroad-Crossing, The.
 Ram for Ould Oireland, A.
 Ruined Man, The.
 Sacred Relics of the Past.
 Sequel to the Old Maid's Prayer.
 Statue Scene, The.
 Story of the Swords, The.
 Sunset Prophecy, A.
 Ticket o' Leave.
 Tipperary.
 "Tom's Dead!"
 Vengeance, A.
 "Willie."
 Wisdom of Ali, The.

CONTENTS OF READING-CLUB NO. 14.

Advanced Thought.
 African Chief, The.
 American Flag, The.
 Bad Boy at Breakfast, The.
 Ballad of Cassandra Brown, The.
 Catastrophe, A.
 Caught by the Tide.
 Charge by the Ford, The.
 Charity: A Problem.
 Clouds, The.
 Confession, The.
 Curfew Heroine, The.
 Deacon's Prayer, The.
 Dot Delephone.
 Drift.
 Good Wife, The.
 How He Won Her.
 In the Floods.
 Irish Philosopher, The.
 Judge's Search for a Waterfall, The.
 King and the Snake, The.
 Knife-Grinder, The.
 Like Mother used to make.
 Little Jesse James.
 "Lord's Plate," The.

New-style Poem, A.
 Nine Suitors, The.
 Not to be Won that Way.
 O'Branigan's Drill.
 O'Connell as an Orator.
 Old Daddy Turner.
 Old Puritan Divines, The.
 Oratory of Wendell Phillips.
 Paddy's Excelsior.
 Pat's Dream of Heaven.
 Plantation Proverbs.
 Prospective.
 Regulus to the Roman Senate.
 Rolla's Address to the Peruvians.
 Roll-Call.
 Scene from "Sweethearts."
 Scene from "The Iron Chest."
 Serious Jar, A.
 Sheridan's Ride.
 Society Play, A.
 Soldier's Reprieve, The.
 Somebody's Darling.
 Unknown.
 Virginia.
 Why No Scotchmen go to Heaven.

CONTENTS OF READING-CLUB NO. 15.

Archery of William Tell, The.
Automatic Cradle, The.
Baby's Soliloquy.
"Blame it all on Me."
Bridget McRae's Wedding Anniversary.
Champion Snorer, The.
Coins of the Realm.
Curly-head.
Dread of Death, The.
Elizabeth Zane.
Error o' Judgment, An.
Fly's Cogitations, A.
Forum Scene, The.
Free Breakfast, A.
Gladiator, The.
Harry Brandon.
He wasn't Ready.
His Mother's Songs.
Household Fairy, A.
Indignant Nellie.
In the Catacombs.
In the Surf.
Irish Schoolmaster, The.
I vash so glad I vash here!
Keenan's Charge.

Langley Lane.
Lasca.
Modern Fiancée, A.
Mother's Doughnuts.
My Wife and Child.
Mule and the Bees, The.
Mobile Bay.
Napoleon Bonaparte.
Ninety-eight.
Old Mother Hubbard, The.
Our Folks.
Phantom Monkey, The.
Post Number Three.
Praying for Shoes.
Rain Prayer, The.
Same Old Story, The.
Shipwreck Story, A.
Somebody's Pride.
Summer Storm.
Tear of Repentance, The.
That Fire at the Nolans'.
United Order of Half-shells, The.
Voice of the Sluggard, The.
Widow O'Shane's Rent, The.
"You've found Heaven first, Janet."

CONTENTS OF READING-CLUB NO. 16.

After Taps.
At Arlington.
At the Rising of the Moon.
Auntie Parson's Story.
Aunt Sophronia at the Opera.
Beecher on Phillips.
Biddy's Philosophy.
Bravest Boy in Town, The.
Brer Rabbit and the Butter.
Cicely and the Bears.
Course of True Love, The.
Drummer's Betrothed, The.
Dutchman's Serenade, The.
Dying Words of Isaac.
Fight with a Trout, A.
Forceful Entry.
Grant's Strategy.
He never told a Lie.
Howl in Rome, A.
Indian Names.
Ingomar.
Jamie Douglas.
John Leland's Examination.
Laughing Philosopher, The.
Leak in the Dike, The.

Lessons in Cookery.
Lesson to Lovers, A.
Love Game, A.
Loves of a Life, The.
"Magdalena."
Menagerie, The.
Nebulous Philosophy.
Never too Late.
No.
Old Canteen, The.
Old Man's Prayer, An.
On the Shores of Tennessee.
Order for a Picture, An.
Original Idea, An.
Over the Left.
Paddy's Dream.
Patent Bedstead, A.
Pat's Reason.
Prisoner of War, The.
Raking the Meadow Lot.
Saddest Sight, The.
Seminole's Reply, The.
September Gale, The.
Soldier's Dream, The.
Song of the Drum, The.

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CONTENTS.

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The Driver of Ninety-three	<i>W. R. Rose.</i>
Metamora to the Council	<i>Lucy Larcom.</i>
How the Ransom was paid	<i>Puck.</i>
Re-Enlisted	<i>Louise Chandler Moulton.</i>
She stood on the Stair	
The House in the Meadow	
A Little Peach	
Mr. Pickwick's Romantic Adventure with a Middle-aged Lady in Yellow Curl-papers,	<i>Dickens.</i>
The Death of D'Assas	<i>Mary E. Vandyne.</i>
The Man with the Musket	<i>H. S. Taylor.</i>
A Tough Customer	<i>William L. Keese.</i>
The Labor Question	<i>Wendell Phillips.</i>
Love and Philosophy	<i>Geo. Runde Jackson.</i>
The Flag	<i>James Jeffrey Roche.</i>
Because	
Together on the Stairs	<i>Andrew G. Tubbs.</i>
The Christening	<i>E. T. Corbett.</i>
The Village Choir	
Filling His Place	<i>Maria L. Eve.</i>
The Heritage	<i>James Russell Lowell.</i>
Casabianca (Colored)	
Mary's Lamb on a New Principle	<i>Charles Follen Adams.</i>
Cut, Cut Behind	<i>Sir Thomas Noon Talfourd.</i>
Scene from "Ion"	
Missing	<i>Mary Bassett Hussey.</i>
Decoration Day	
When Greek met Greek	<i>Theron Brown.</i>
The Rajah's Clock	<i>Mary C. Huntington.</i>
The Deacon's Ride	<i>Mrs. Julia D. Pratt.</i>
The Silver Bell	
Counting Eggs	<i>Thomas Hood.</i>
The Fall	<i>George A. Stockwell.</i>
A Centre-Board Yacht-Race	<i>Irvin Russell.</i>
The Mississippi Miracle	<i>John Boyle O'Reilly.</i>
Wendell Phillips	
Malaria.	
Puzzled	
The Book Canvasser	<i>Eugene J. Hall.</i>
The Engineer's Story	<i>Oliver Optic.</i>
The Coming Wave	<i>Gerald Massey.</i>
The Story of Sir Arnulph	<i>Anna F. Burnham.</i>
A Lost Child	
When McGue puts the Baby to Sleep	<i>Mary A. P. Stansbury.</i>
Jem's Last Ride	
Over the Crossin'	
Somehow or Other	
Taters	<i>W. O. Eaton.</i>
"An Unknown Man, respectably dressed"	<i>Helen Jackson.</i>
"Bay Billy"	<i>Frank H. Gassaway.</i>
Mining Help	<i>Mrs. S. E. Dawes.</i>